



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
6013 Lakeside Blvd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46278

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December 3, 2007

SUBJECT: CPA – Technical Assistance for Conservation Cropping Systems in Indiana

File Code: 180-0

TO: All NRCS Employees

**Background:**

Conservation Cropping Systems or “bundles” with practices like no-till, cover crops, conservation buffers and nutrient management lead to significant improvement in soil, water and air quality while providing significant reduction in farm energy consumption. It is the combination of these practices that make major improvements to the life and biological processes in the soil, and work to conserve a variety of natural resources.

No agency can deliver a better bundle of these Conserving Practices than NRCS and the Indiana Conservation Partnership. By providing knowledge-based conservation through our technical assistance, we have the delivery system and ability to provide assistance to any size operation for statewide adoption of these practices.

No-Till and Strip-Till are the foundation of this system. No practice in all of Indiana agriculture has greater potential to reduce energy consumption or improve soil, water and air resources.

Indiana NRCS has made significant investments in promoting these systems in terms of outreach, education, training, and financial incentives and the demand from Indiana producers has grown. It is imperative that NRCS planners have the knowledge, competence and confidence to plan these systems with producers.

**Action:**

To continue to meet the demand for regional expertise and recognize individuals that demonstrate a sound background and experience in planning and implementing these practices, NRCS Indiana will invest additional time and training to develop ‘**Conservation Cropping Systems Experts**’.

1. These employees will be available as the first level of additional Technical Assistance to local NRCS and Partnership Employees for situations requiring additional expertise and assistance in Conservation Cropping Systems when working with producers.

2. These employees will receive prioritized training in agronomy such as soil quality, No-till/Strip-Till systems, Nutrient Management, and cover crops.
  - a. They will attend the National No-Till Conference and similar regional conferences.
    - i. A representative will present a summary of the technical information obtained at the conference to the Leadership Team and at each Area Meeting.
  - b. They will receive Soil Quality Training from the National Soil Quality Team.
  - c. They will meet at least semi-annually as a group and at the farms of top no-till producers to see and discuss the latest advancements in technology.
  - d. They will continually share information to stay current and remain motivated in the pursuit of high expertise.
3. These employees will work with the local DCs to support SWCD and other local workshops to promote Conservation Cropping Systems practices.
4. These employees will provide motivation, training and networking to other Conservation Partnership planners to promote Conservation Cropping Systems.
5. These employees will work with local agri-businesses (equipment, seed, fertilizer, etc. dealers), Certified Crop Advisors, and others to promote Conservation Cropping Systems practices.

Attached is the initial cadre of 'Conservation Cropping Systems Experts' that have been identified. If additional employees are interested in being a part of this team, please discuss the opportunity with your Area Conservationist, and Area Conservationists should then notify Barry Fisher, State Agronomist, and Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist.

I am excited about this latest effort to ensure our employees are well-trained and able to meet the Technical Assistance demands from our producers, and the resulting conservation on the ground. My expectation is to make NRCS the first call for a producer interested in a sustainable Conservation Cropping System.

Please direct all questions related to this bulletin to your Area Conservationist, Barry Fisher, State Agronomist at (317) 290-3200, ext. 350, or to Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist at (317) 290-3200, ext. 388.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY  
State Conservationist

Attachment

cc: Jerod Chew, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indianapolis, IN

## **Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Experts**

### **State Office**

Barry Fisher-Indianapolis

Tony Bailey- Indianapolis

### **Northeast Area**

Barry Bortner-Fort Wayne

Sherm Liechty- Fort Wayne

Bill Lambert-Auburn

Joe Updike-Wabash

Sam St. Clair-Warsaw

Darrell Brown-Bluffton

### **Southeast Area**

Jennifer Kipper-Greensburg

Curtis Knueven-Rushville

Tim Schwipps-Versailles

Ruth Hackman-Salem

Brian Ingmire-North Vernon

### **Southwest Area**

Don Donovan-Rockville

Doris Scully-Brazil

Tom Held-Vincennes

Bill Norfleet-Mt. Vernon

Keri Bilbo-Vincennes

### **Northwest Area**

Todd Ames-Rensselaer

Brianne Lowe- Rensselaer

Stacy Odom-Lafayette

David Stanley-Crawfordsville

Henry Wallis-Danville